

March 27, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, and
Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC
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The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, and
Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC
20510

Dear Chairman Heinrich and Ranking Member Hoeven:

As your subcommittee considers the fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations bill, we write to express our support for robust funding for the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP). With broad bipartisan support, the 2018 Farm Bill created LAMP by combining two longstanding programs: the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP) and the Value-Added Producers Grant Program (VAPG) in order to streamline the programs and provide permanent mandatory funding.

As a part of LAMP, FMLFPP and VAPG continue to operate largely as they had under the 2014 Farm Bill with each program's mission, grant priorities and activities being retained. However, in combining those programs, FMLFPP was provided \$5.3 million less in annual mandatory grant funding compared to the 2014 Farm Bill. LAMP provides VAPG with a small increase in mandatory funding relative to the 2014 Farm Bill, yet that increase coupled with a decline in discretionary funding would result in lower overall funding for the program compared to the 2014 Farm Bill.

VAPG was created in 2000 to help farmers manage risk by adding value to the commodities they produced on their farms. VAPG offers planning or working capital grants to farmers, ranchers, dairymen and fishermen developing farm- and food-related businesses that boost farm income and create jobs in rural America. Since 2001, VAPG has invested over \$450 million into over 3,000 value-added enterprises in every state across the country. FMLFPP is a competitive grant program that funds direct-to-consumer marketing strategies as well as local and regional food business enterprises that act as intermediaries between producers and consumers by aggregating, storing, processing, and/or distributing locally or regionally produced food products to meet market demand. Since 2006, FMLFPP and its precursor FMPP have invested over \$250 million into developing new markets for family farmers and ranchers in nearly every state across the country, investments that were critical to the success of local food producers quickly responding to supply chain disruptions and community hunger precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite its demonstrated successes and growing interest in value-added agriculture and local and regional food markets, without future discretionary funding, annual FMLFPP and VAPG

investments will shrink relative to the 2014 Farm Bill. We are pleased that the final FY2023 spending bill included roughly \$20 million for LAMP, distributed appropriately between the two programs; this level of funding ensures that both programs are maintained at their historical levels and continue to help producers and rural communities develop new economic opportunities.

As agricultural and rural communities continue to struggle through volatile commodity prices, trade uncertainty, and changing consumer preferences, programs like those that make up LAMP are needed to support independent operations and foster entrepreneurial spirit. We urge you to provide robust discretionary funding for LAMP as you develop agriculture spending legislation for FY 2024.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



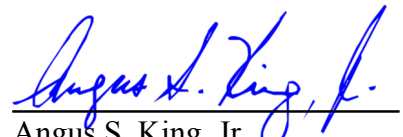
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



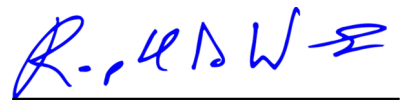
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator




Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator




Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



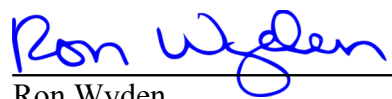
Jack Reed
United States Senator




Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator




Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator




Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator